Ramparts

25 September 1967

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

I am enclosing a copy of the statement signed, so far, by 220 writers and editors who pledge to refuse payment of the proposed 10 per cent income tax surcharge or any tax increase earmarked for the Vietnam War. At this writing, seven New York Times writers and editors have signed. We plan to run a full-page advertisement in the Times in mid-October, giving the quote from Thoreau, the pledge and the list of names. The placing of the ad will coincide with Congressional debate on the tax surcharge. By that time we hope to have 500 persons pledged to refuse payment.

If you would be interested in signing the statement, please fill in the blank and mail it in as soon as possible. And please tell your writer and editor friends about it and urge them to do the same. As Thoreau said, "If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood." During his incarceration for refusal to pay his war tax, Thoreau was paid a visit by Emerson, who asked, "What are you doing in here?" To which Thoreau replied, "What are you doing out there?"

I feel strongly that the collective involvement of writers and editors in the nation's politics should not stop with the War Tax Protest. Many of our colleagues share this view, and are preparing this fall to organize local chapters of what can become a national writers and journalists association. An organized and articulate "intelligentsia" can be a political force in America as it is in France. And it must become a political force if the increasingly oppressive policies of the present United States government -- in Vietnam, in Southern Africa, in Latin America and here at home -- are to be permanently reversed. Not to organize, not to amplify our voices so that an ill-informed America may hear alternatives, is to accede, in effect, to the policies of the present government. For more information, please write me immediately at 377 Green Street, San Francisco, California 94133.

Yours,

David Welsh
Senior Editor

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DW:pg

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"How does it become a man to behave toward this American government today? I answer that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it ... In other words, when ... a whole country is overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army ... There are thousands who are in opinion opposed to ... the war ... who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets; and say that they know not what to do, and do nothing ... They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for others to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret ... What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn ... If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood."

-- Henry David Thoreau, Civil Disobedience, 1849, commenting upon American involvement in the Mexican War.

We the undersigned writers and editors, believing that American involvement in Vietnam is morally wrong, pledge:

1. None of us voluntarily will pay the proposed 10% income tax surcharge or any war-designated tax increase.

2. Many of us will not pay that 23% of our current income tax which is being used to finance the war in Vietnam.

Lloyd Richard Ellison
Richard M. Elman
Joseph Felshin
Laurence Ferlinghetti
W. H. Ferry
David W. Fisher
Harold Flender
Isabel W. Fox
Joseph M. Fox
Jean Todd Freeman
Betty Friedan
Dan Georgakas
Edwin Gilbert
Ralph Ginzburg
Todd Gitlin
Natalie Gittelson
Mitchell Goodman
Paul Goodman
Sally Goodman
Saul Gottlieb
Jean Gould
Dan Green
Caroline Greenberg
Josh Greenfeld
Harold Greenwald
Ronald Gross
Jean Grossman
Richard L. Grossman
William H. Y. Hackett
Richard Hammer
Dianne Harris
Mary Heathcote
James Leo Herlihy
Neil Hickey
Warren Hinckle
Susan Hirschmann
Berenice Hoffman
Len Holt
Lamar Hoover
John Hopper
Richard Hudson
Thomas Humber
Will Inman
Paul Jacobs
Martin Jezer
Louise Kapp
Peter Kemeny
Edwin Kennebeck
James Kirkwood
Richard Kostelanetz
Norman Kotker
Zane Kotker
Max Kozloff
Barbara S. Kraft
Paul Krassner
Louise Lacey
Keith Lampe
Elinor Langer
Eric Lasher
Sidney Lens
John Leonard
Denise Levertov
Janice Lloyd
Louis E. Lomax
Kennett Love
Dick Lourie
Walter Lowenfels
Dwight Macdonald
A. Kent MacDougall
Martha MacGregor
Iris Lezak MacLow
Jackson MacLow
Henry Magdol
George Mandel
Richard Marek
Robert Markel
Charles Lam Markmann
Peter Matthiessen
Milton Mayer
Alice Mayhew
James R. McCawley
James McConkey
John McDermott
David McReynolds
Harold Mehling
Merle Miller
Henry Misrock
Howard R. Moody
Ira Morris
Kelly Morris
Carl Morse
Erika Munk
Henry Myers
Jack Nessel
Jay Neugeboren
Peter Nevraumont
Jack Newfield
Robert Nichols
William Noble
Bink Noll
Robert M. Ockene
Ned O'Gorman
Grace Paley
Adam Parry
Frances Fox Piven
Richard Poirier
Ned Polsky
Thomas Pynchon
Jules Rabin
Ann Reit
Evan H. Rhodes
Adrienne Rich
Alan Rinzler
Frances Ross
William S. Rukeyser
Marshall Sahlins
Faith Sale
J. Kirk Sale
Gertrude Samuels
John P. Scanlon
Gertrude P. Schafer
Hal Scharlatt
Richard Schechner
Robert Scheer
Andre Schiffrin
Janet Schulman
Richard Seaver
David Segal
Selma Shapiro
Robert Sherrill
Paul Showers
Jules Siegel
Alvin Simon
Joan Simon
John Simon
John J. Simon
Bennett Sims
Susan Sontag
Peter Sourian
Peter Spackman
John Speicher
Gloria Steinem
Dorothy Sterling
Philip Sterling
Samuel D. Stewart
Neal G. Stuart
Harvey Swados
Dave Swaney
Hope Taylor
Norman Thomas
Hunter Thompson
Caroline Trager
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
Gerald Walker
Greta Walker
Arthur I. Waskow
Sonya Weil
David Welsh
Ruth West
Wallace White
Roger Wiesenbach
Judith Winkler
Sol Yurick
Howard Zinn
Benjamin Spock

Willful refusal to pay Federal Income Taxes is a violation of Sec. 7203 of the Internal Revenue Code and is punishable by up to one year in prison and/or up to $10,000.00 in fines.